

THE  
**FUTURE  
OF  
AMERICA'S  
NATIONAL  
PARKS**

First Annual  
Centennial Strategy for

# Little River Canyon National Preserve

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



**Site:** LIRI

**Year:** 2007

**Vision Statement**

Little River Canyon National Preserve was established to protect and make available the nationally significant geologic and scenic resources found in Northeast Alabama; to protect the Outstanding National Resource waters of Little River; and to protect the threatened and endangered species found in Little River Canyon.

This canyon, cut by a river on top of an ancient mountain, is the home territory of bald eagles and black bears. It is used by kayakers, swimmers, hunters and other recreation users from cities and towns throughout the region, and visited by citizens from across the nation. It is known as a place of solitude and a place of natural beauty where natural processes are on display.

Threats to this natural wonder exist in the form of development and potentially incompatible uses by neighboring landowners. We are challenged to protect the scenic values of Little River while allowing private landowners the freedom they desire to use their lands. We are challenged to protect the water quality while outside development can bring bacteria and other threats into the preserve.

Little River Canyon National Preserve has the duty to care for its resources in perpetuity. We must work together with park neighbors and visitors to find ways to enjoy and appreciate all that the land and water have to offer.

Our Centennial Vision is to improve our recreational, educational and scientific capacity while properly protecting our irreplaceable resources. This will be accomplished through partnerships that improve our ability to reach and interpret to the public; through new educational outreach programs that teach not only about the preserve but also about how to safely enjoy its recreational opportunities; through scientific work conducted by the NPS and partners to develop new and more effective ways to protect and enhance resources within the preserve and other related areas; and by helping our neighbors understand that the resources of Little River Canyon must be protected individually and collectively.

**Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager**

John Bundy

Site: LIRI

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Provide inspiring, safe, and accessible places for people to enjoy - the standard to which all other park systems aspire.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Little River Canyon will seek funding to develop trails and a bike path along the canyon rim drive. Additional overlooks will be established to provide places for visitors to learn about the canyon and its significant resources.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: LIRI

STEWARDSHIP

☒ **Improve the condition of park resources and assets.**

☒ **Restore native habitats by controlling invasive species and reintroducing key plant and animal species.**

Invasive species continue to be an area of focus for park staff. Removal of invasives is labor intensive. Little River Canyon will continue to remove exotic species and represent a portion of the Southeastern United States where native species are dominant.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

☒ **Improve high-priority assets to acceptable condition, as measured by the Facility Condition Index.**

The repair and maintenance of waysides, restrooms, roads, trails, and other facilities will continue to be a high priority at Little River Canyon.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

☒ **Improve the natural resources in parks, as measured by the vital signs developed under the Natural Resource Challenge.**

Water quality is being monitored at Little River Canyon. Data indicate that this Outstanding National Resource Water may be threatened by development or by activities outside the boundary of the preserve. We will continue to monitor the water quality and begin to investigate the location and potential threats to the water quality. We will also implement the monitoring of other vital signs already identified under the Natural Resource Challenge.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

☒ **Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

Little River Canyon must develop and maintain ways to care for its collection.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: LIRI

STEWARDSHIP

☒ **Assure that no compelling chapter in the American heritage experience remains untold and that strategically important landscapes are acquired, as authorized by Congress.**

☒ **Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

Legislation identifies Little River Canyon National Preserve as having outstanding scenery yet development on adjacent lands poses an immediate threat to that resources. Over the next several years the preserve will work with adjacent landowners and others to preserve this scenery in compliance with the legislation.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: LIRI

STEWARDSHIP

☒ **Encourage children to be future conservationists.**

☒ **Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

Interpretive programs oriented toward conservaiton of resources will be developed and implemented in partnership with Jacksonville State University at the Little River Canyon Center.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: LIRI

ENVIRONMENT

☒ **Reduce environmental impacts of park operations.**

☒ **Reduce the environmental impacts of park operations on air and water quality.**

An Environmental Management Plan will be completely implemented in 2008. This will include reducing all purchases to environmentally friendly products wherever appropriate, and following an approved green purchasing plan. The park wide recycling program will continue as well as placing recycling containers throughout the preserve for visitors.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: LIRI

**ENVIRONMENT**

☒ **Inspire an environmental conscience in Americans.**

☒ **Establish programs to showcase exemplary environmental practices and increase visitor awareness of how the practices apply to their daily lives, as measured by surveys.**

Little River Canyon, in partnership with Jacksonville State University, will develop environmental awareness interpretive programs based on the LEED certified facility they will share. These programs will demonstrate reduced waste, recycling, and environmentally friendly construction.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

☒ **Demonstrate environmental excellence through increased use of alternative energy and fuels at every park.**

Little River Canyon, in partnership with Jacksonville State University, will develop environmental awareness interpretive programs based on the LEED certified facility they will share. Alternative energy will be demonstrated through geothermal heating at the facility.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

☒ **Serve as a model for energy efficiency, under Executive Order 13423, by ensuring Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards.**

Little River Canyon, in partnership with Jacksonville State University, will develop environmental awareness interpretive programs based on the LEED certified facility they will share. Construction has begun on the new facility. Completion is expected in June of 2009.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

☒ **Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

Working in partnership with the State of Alabama, Little River Canyon will serve as a leader in developing state game management units that emphasize the use of native plantings to enhance game populations.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: LIRI

RECREATION

☒ Encourage collaboration among and assist park and recreation systems at every level—federal, regional, state, local—to help build an outdoor recreation network accessible to all Americans.

☒ Rehabilitate over 2,000 miles of trails within or connected to national parks, including trails accessible to those with disabilities.

Little River Canyon will work with neighboring DeSoto State Park to rehabilitate the Boy Scout Trail along Little River.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

We will work with the Alabama Trailriders Association to improve our existing trail system and make it more useful to horseback riding groups.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: LIRI

RECREATION

☒ Establish “volun-tourism” excursions to national parks for volunteers to help achieve natural and cultural resource protection goals.

☒ Increase annual volunteer hours by 100 percent, from 5.2 million hours to 10.4 million hours.

The park will construct two campsite with full utilities for use by long term park volunteers.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: LIRI

RECREATION

☒ Focus national, regional, and local tourism efforts to reach diverse audiences and young people and to attract visitors to lesser-known parks.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Little River Canyon will continue to partner with Jacksonville State University in bilingual interpretive programs. The preserve will also continue providing bilingual signs and handouts for non-English speaking visitors.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: LIRI

EDUCATION

☒ Promote life-long learning to connect generations through park experiences.

☒ Enroll an additional two million children in the Junior Ranger program.

Little River Canyon will develop a Junior Ranger program that provides our youth with an understanding of why the canyon was set aside for all the people. It will also teach our Junior Rangers about the National Park Service.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: LIRI

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ Use strategic planning to promote management excellence.

☒ Establish a structured professional development curriculum to provide park managers with the skills to apply best business practices and superior leadership.

Many employees have attained their skills through day to day experiences. Little River Canyon will seek to properly and sufficiently train its staff in the protection and enhancement of resources.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: LIRI

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ Promote a safety and health culture for all employees and visitors.

☒ Reduce the number of employee lost-time incidents and serious visitor injuries by 20 percent.

Little River Canyon staff now focus on safety during each task they perform. It is the goal of the preserve staff to be safety aware in all aspects of their work every day.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS



Site: LIRI

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ Model what it means to work in partnership.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

A partnership between Little River Canyon and Jacksonville State University will not be one-sided. Many partnerships within the NPS result in either the partner giving the NPS money to do NPS work, or the NPS gives money to support a partner that provides little return. The Little River Canyon/JSU partner ship will be one of shared benefits. Educational programs are shared and research is shared so that each benefits from the other.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS